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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0445  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0236  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1151  
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 03 ASTANA 000094

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: CENTCOM CDR PETRAEUS MEETS PRESIDENT  
NAZARBAYEV, JANUARY 14

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\* Missing Section 001 \*  
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fully gave up that status. I tell them it would be to their benefit to be non-nuclear. That would draw new assistance and investment." General Petraeus said he again fully agreed with the president, but noted Iran's policy is determined by the Revolutionary Guard al-Quds Force commander, not by President Ahmedinejad or the Foreign Ministry. Nazarbayev noted he had once talked to Ahmedinejad for two and a half hours about such issues, "but in the end I realized I had just wasted my time." He said Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khameni told him that even if Iran compromises on the nuclear issue, the United States would always find another reason to criticize "because they hate us -- all the United States wants is to conquer the entire region and steal the oil." General Petraeus interjected, "We could have bought all the oil in the region for 100 years for what we've spent in Iraq!" Nazarbayev, looking a bit amused, said, "I know. I'm just telling you what he said." Without specifying his interlocutor, Nazarbayev said he'd asked if Tehran is willing to talk to the United States, "and they said yes. I conveyed this to President-elect Obama during our (post-U.S. election) phone call." General Petraeus commented the United States had had three rounds of talks with Iran about Iraq but had gotten nowhere. Nazarbayev said, "I have no illusion U.S. negotiations with Iran would be easy or fast, but we cannot let Iran have nuclear weapons. I want to be helpful with Iran."

16. (S) Nazarbayev added he has discussed Iran's nuclear ambitions with Russian President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin: "I emphasize to them a nuclear Iran is in no one's interests." General Petraeus responded that it's important to get Russia to be helpful with Iran: "They seem conflicted. Sometimes they help; sometimes they send weapons." Nazarbayev said, "I told Obama that he has a good chance to have good relations with Mevedev. That's important for us, too, since Russia and Kazakhstan are neighbors."

RUSSIA

¶17. (S) General Petraeus told President Nazarbayev Kazakhstan's special relationship with Russia is not a problem for the United States. "It's not a zero-sum game for us. You can have good relations with Russia and China as well as with us." Nazarbayev said he fully agreed, adding, "I tell Russia and China we have our own resources. We are Kazakhs. We were colonized for over 500 years, first by the Golden Horde, then by the western Chinese, then by Russia. We've been independent for only 17 years, and we do not want to be colonized again. We will never be 'under' Russia or China. We have enough resources and a reasonably educated population to make our own choices. We want stability, development, and cooperation. We all have to have Russia 'inside the tent.' I'd like the United States and the European Union to help with this."

¶18. (S) Nazarbayev said the West had made real mistakes after the collapse of the Soviet Union by not treating Yeltsin with respect. He said Yeltsin had once gone to the NATO-Russia Council where he had been "teased." Nazarbayev explained Russia has great, but now injured, pride. It was once a great empire, and Russian soldiers had played a large role in winning the Great Patriotic War (WW II), but the West seems to refuse to understand this. For Russia, maintained Nazarbayev, "face" is everything. Nazarbayev said he had frequently told President Medvedev that being an energy superpower is not enough; it's essential to develop international leadership with a spirit of cooperation. Nazarbayev said Medvedev was "almost there," but then the "Georgia mistake happened." Nazarbayev concluded, "If the new U.S. administration has a wise response to Russia, I'd be glad to help" with the relationship.

¶19. (S) NOTE: While waiting for Nazarbayev to enter the meeting room, General Petraeus ask Foreign Policy Adviser Sarybay why Kazakhstan had moved its capital from Almaty to

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Astana. Sarybay answered, "There are probably 20 different reasons people give. In fact, in the first few years of independence, several maps appeared that made our northern border unclear, and so the President 'planted the flag.'" This is the first time we are aware that a senior official has confirmed Nazarbayev moved his capital to prevent Russian nationalists from annexing the northern third of Kazakhstan, which hotheads, including some in the Duma at that time, claimed was historically part of Russia. END NOTE.

¶10. (S) COMMENT: Nazarbayev looked as fit as ever and was very well-briefed, discussing details of the U.S.-Kazakhstan military relationship without notes. He was not shy that he sees himself as an international statesman. We know he was genuinely pleased with President-elect Obama's telephone call, and we judge his offers to be helpful for the United States with Iran and Russia are genuine. END COMMENT.

¶11. (U) General Petraeus has cleared this cable.  
HOAGLAND